

*ON THE THIRTEENTH
ANNIVERSARY OF
AYATOLLAH
KHOMEINI'S DEATH*



by
His Eminence
Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah

This is the path we are pursuing, and the one we learned from the Imam. We should persevere in our jihad, our struggle, and our resistance; we should be present on the field, never submit, and spread hope and optimism in the people's hearts. We have to redirect the battle's path towards that place where they will be the ones who scream in pain; these murderers are the killers of prophets, of messengers, of the innocent, and the poor, and therefore should be the ones to scream and retreat. This day will come, without a doubt. The school to which Imam Khomeini belonged has been reborn and anchored anew in a clear intellectual, doctrinal, political, and jihadi vision; it has witnessed all these experiences, sacrifices, and victories. Therefore, on this day of remembrance of the Imam whose sun has never set, we should commit ourselves to the path on which we have indeed offered many martyrs and sacrifices, but have found at the end of it only victory, self-esteem, and dignity for ourselves, our people, the motherland, our citizens, our nation, and for every oppressed and suffering human being.

We pledge ourselves to our Imam on his day of remembrance, that he will remain ever present in our minds, our hearts, and the blood in our veins, until all our great and lofty objectives are achieved.

And may God's peace, mercy, and blessings be upon you all.

Published in *Voice of Hezbollah: The Statements of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah*, 2007

Cover: A large picture of Ayatollah Khomeini hangs from tank gun barrel in front of Niavaran Palace in Tehran, Iran, February 13, 1979, by Aristotle Saris

which means they enter and exit from Nablus, Tulkarm, Qalqilya or whatever city at will.⁸ They continually enter to destroy homes, arrest the *mujahidin*, and terrorize the citizens. Here, let me say once again that he who caused Preventive Wall to fail, in spite of all the sadness, sacrifices, and pain, could also cause Revolving Door to fail, in spite of all the suffering. The response, dear brothers, to the massacres, the blood-soaked policies, and to the violence, is the same as the response to the 15th of Khordad, when 5,000 Iranians were killed in one hour, which was for the blessed Islamic *intifada* to go on until it achieved victory 16 years later. The response to the massacres of Sabra and Chatila was for the resistance to become active in Lebanon; and the response to Iron Fist in the south of Lebanon, before the 1985 withdrawal,⁹ was for the resistance to take root, become more martyrdom-oriented, exert more effort, and become more generous and of a higher standard. Just as the response to Defensive Shield was an increase in the number of martyrdom operations that foiled the objectives of that actual wall, all responses have to be similar in fashion and style. This the Palestinian has it within his power to do. What else does the Palestinian have? Does he own the Security Council, international organizations, or international and regional relations that can tip the balance in his favor against 'israel'? This is the only asset the Palestinian people have—and those who give up on the resistance are killing all over again the martyrs of Jenin and in Nablus. If the Lebanese people had given up on the resistance, they too would have been complicit in the massacres of Qana and Sabra and Chatila.

8 Three Palestinian cities located in the northern West Bank.

9 'israel's' "Iron Fist" policy in south Lebanon obliterated numerous villages, and instituted a particularly harsh crackdown on any persons believed to sympathize with or be a part of militant activities in the area. It was initiated in concert with 'israel's' redeployment to the "security zone" in early 1985.

ON THE THIRTEENTH ANNIVERSARY OF AYATOLLAH KHOMEINI'S DEATH

June 4, 2002

Speaking at the Iranian embassy in Beirut, His Eminence Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah points to Imam Khomeini's revolution as having "suffered in the past the same way the resistance factions in Lebanon are now suffering and have suffered in the past. It is also," he adds, "similar to the suffering the intifada and resistance in Palestine are going through at the moment." Accordingly, Nasrallah invokes Khomeini as a tactician to be admired and imitated, especially in regard to his steadfastness and intelligence.

In the name of God the merciful, the compassionate,
May God's peace, mercy, and blessings be upon you all.

As we commemorate the Imam, we return to him seeking inspiration, learning, and guidance. On this day we call upon everyone to revisit the Imam's experience, teachings, thought, biography, path, and project, with the hope of finding that which can help us overcome many of the crises that face revival, liberation, and awakening movements throughout the Arab and Islamic worlds. The Imam's movement was not a political movement severed from its roots; nor was it a jihadi revival movement disconnected from its ideological background. The Imam's movement, path, and revival rested rather on very solid theoretical, intellectual, scientific, and doctrinal bases. This allows us therefore to draw upon a vast sea of knowledge, and learn from this comprehensive and exhaustive school all that helps us confront every occasion, challenge, and conflict.

Dear sisters and brothers, many might believe that the problem between the Imam and the Shah in early 1960–1,¹ when the Imam’s movement first saw the light, was an internal problem, and that the Imam disagreed with the Shah’s regime in Iran at the time on issues related to freedom, agriculture, rights, and other such matters, as though the issue was purely domestic. In fact, when we go back to the Imam’s words and speeches in the early days of his revival movement, we find that his problem with the Shah’s regime emanated from issues involving the nation, and from the notion of the great struggle, rather than from internal Iranian issues. We therefore used to see, even in the way the Imam prioritized his topics, that he always spoke first about the Shah’s regime as an instrument of repression and an agent of the united states of amerika. He described it as an absolute client regime of the united states, and instead advocated Iran’s independence from the mother of all catastrophes and corruption, and the greatest Satan of all. This is something that Iranians and many in the world know well, because they were also aware that the real rulers of Iran [at that time] were the amerikans, who placed over 60,000 amerikan experts throughout the state’s civil, military, security, and political administrations and institutions. The first cause of the conflict between the Imam and the Shah, therefore, was the fact that the regime was an amerikan agent, a stranger to its own citizens and to the culture, history, and civilization of its people and nation.

1 Nasrallah may here be referring to Khomeini’s vocal opposition to Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi’s “White Revolution”—a program of reform officially announced in January 1963, which called, among other things, for land reform, the sale of state-owned infrastructure, and a national literacy campaign. Khomeini accused the Shah (1919–1980) of violating Iran’s Constitution, and of submission to amerika and ‘israel.’ He was arrested on June 5 the same year, and, although released, was rearrested the following year and sent into exile.

organizational structures and reforms, ordering the unification of the security services, and interfering in the election of officials. Since no political party could ever accept the same for itself, how can it then accept it, after all those decades of heavy sacrifice, for the framework that is to become the Palestinian people’s state?

Dear brothers and sisters, we are not speaking about stubbornness in the face of the current state of affairs—we are simply advancing a vision, an idea, an experience, a path, and a theory that other people have tried before us, and which we in Lebanon have lived through. The enemy can be defeated through continued determination, steadfastness, and resistance. Today in ‘israel,’ the ‘israeli’ press, politicians, and military officials are talking about Operation Defensive Shield’s failure, and no one is speaking anymore about its success.⁶ Ben Eliezer and Mofaz were optimistic when they spoke about the resistance in Palestine being able to rebuild its jihadi infrastructure in four months. And look, a few days later the Palestinian *mujahidin* successfully executed a series of operations in the West Bank and in the 1948 territories, about which we have all heard.⁷ This explains why ‘israel’ has shifted gears, and is following today a new policy it calls Revolving Door,

6 Operation Defensive Shield, which lasted from the end of March 2002 until mid-May the same year, was directed at a number of West Bank towns, most notably the refugee camp at Jenin and the city of Ramallah, where Arafat remained under effective siege. The operation was ostensibly prompted by a month of violence against ‘israelis’ in March, which left more than 135 zionst settlers dead in attacks committed by Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade. According to a UN report of August 2002, Operation Defensive Shield claimed some 497 Palestinian lives, with a further 1,447 wounded. Human Rights Watch subsequently criticized the report as being a “watered-down account of the very serious violations in Jenin.”

7 “The 1948 territories” refers to the boundaries of the settler entity ‘israel’ that existed from the Nakba up until the June 1967 war.

said to them, “Yes, we ask that this criminal be tried, not that he be rewarded and enthroned King of Iran once again, this time with our consent. Second, even from the point of view of the wisdom of such a move, leaving Mohammad Reza Pahlavi as the symbolic king of Iran is tantamount to keeping the amerikan—‘israeli’ hegemonic nail in Iran’s back—a nail that could lengthen still, develop, and later on regain the upper hand.” The Imam refused all these humiliating settlements, and insisted on having his own way. He persevered, and was very patient; he had to endure a lot of sacrifice, and had reached the end of the road.

The same thing happened with the resistance. Beginning in 1983, and even after 1985, they proposed to Lebanon that ‘israel’ withdraw as part of a peace agreement. The resistance’s steadfastness, however, forced the zionists to retreat from asking for a peace agreement to asking for security arrangements, security negotiations, and security guarantees. They said: “We do not agree to give any guarantees; let Lebanon, for example, give us guarantees that our borders will not be subject to attack, and that the resistance will stop at this point.” At the end of the day, however, the resistance succeeded in achieving the objective that people said was unrealistic, and the enemy withdrew without settlements, guarantees, compromises, limits, or conditions. This backtracking, which we all witnessed together, is very important as far as our brothers in Palestine are concerned.

Imagine the point which the desperate situation in Palestine today has reached—though I do not wish to repeat what others have said before me. The slogan of an independent Palestinian state has always been raised high, but so far there is no independent Palestine—there is a self-administration or, let’s say, a Palestinian authority that exercises self-rule. In spite of that, where is this independence? The amerikans and the zionists who committed atrocities, and those who protected them, are the ones imposing

The second topic on which the Imam insisted in his speeches and declarations concerned the position of the Shah’s regime on the conflict with ‘israel.’ This regime was strategically allied with ‘israel,’ and formed a rear base from which it could target the Arab nation. The Imam stood up and demanded that relations with ‘israel’ be severed, that oil supplies to it be halted, and that any kind of relations between Iran and ‘israel’ be brought to an end, and condemned the Shah’s regime for its position and for what it represented. This means that in the early 1960s, when the Shah’s regime supported ‘israel’ with free oil supplies, Imam Khomeini was in the city of Qom decreeing that payment of the *Zakat* and *Khoms* to the Palestinian *mujahidin* at the time should be allowed, regardless of their ideological background and whether they were Islamist, nationalist, Marxists or anything else. He decreed that *Zakat* and *Khoms* could be given to them because they were fighting the zionists and defending the entire nation; this was one of the biggest contradictions at that time in Iran. The third issue was internal—namely the oppression, despotism, tyranny and repression the Shah’s regime represented.

Thus, after Imam Khomeini’s early speeches in al-Faydiya School in 1960, and after the Shah’s men broke into this school, killed students, and threw them over the balconies, causing the martyrdom of several among them and wounding many others—after all this terrorism, they approached the Imam and told him, “If you want to deliver speeches and issue statements we will have no problems with that, but there are three red lines that you are not allowed to cross; first amerika, second ‘israel,’ and third the person of the Shah. If you want to talk about the Iranian government, the ministers, parliamentarians, programs, and ministerial projects, we have no objection, but mentioning the amerikan administration, ‘israel’ or the Shah personally in your speeches is a red line: crossing it is punishable by death.”

At the following celebration in memory of the martyrs of the Faydiya School, the Imam addressed the people saying: “Men from the Shah’s Savak² came to see me and told me this and that; I am telling you that amerika is the mother of all catastrophes, ‘israel’ is a cancerous gland, and the Shah is a tyrannical and corrupt ruler who should be punished for all the crimes he has committed against Iran and the nation.” From the very beginning, the central issues around which the Imam’s revolution against the Shah revolved brought into focus the nation’s position regarding the struggle against the great Satan, ‘israel,’ and against oppression and tyranny, which this regime represented. He chose the path of a mass popular movement, and placed immense trust in his people. This revolution lasted from 1963 to 1979: sixteen years of struggle, jihad, challenges, confrontation, and blood that culminated in victory.

Sisters and brothers, Imam Khomeini’s revolution and movement suffered in the past the same way resistance factions in Lebanon are now suffering, and have suffered in the past. It is also similar to the suffering the *intifada* and resistance in Palestine are going through at the moment. Beginning in the early 1960s, the Imam faced the first widespread doubts over the aims of his popular *intifada*. These doubts, alas, were not restricted to the campaigns of the Shah or the arrogant powers of this world, but also involved some of the simple and good-hearted friends who were not aware of the ominous dimensions of what was going on. They doubted whether the aim was realistic: “Old man, how is it possible to oust amerika from Iran, ‘israel’ from Iran, and the Shah’s deeply rooted regime from institutions, circles of power, security services, government authorities, the economy and the media, when you have no weapons with which to do it? This is unrealistic, crazy, a figment of the imagination and a mirage. You

2 The Savak was Iran’s brutal internal security organization under the Shah.

victorious he sought to bring Iran back into the national fold, because he knew very well the real reasons why his movement had been isolated for all those years.

This is what the resistance in Lebanon had to face, and also what the resistance and *intifada* in Palestine came up against—namely, its isolation, the siege [laid against it], and the abandonment of the Palestinian people. He who supports them by word is a terrorist; he who gives them money is a terrorist; and he who supplies them with weapons is a terrorist who should be punished, according to the law of the new amerikan world order.

Fifth, in the last few years, the Imam had to face various settlement propositions, especially after he left Najaf for Paris. This is a very important aspect of the Imam’s movement and experience. They approached him in Paris when they realized that the Shah’s regime was about to collapse, and proposed to him a compromise solution, which is what usually happens with jihadi movements and popular *intifadas*. When the oppressors find themselves about to expire, they resort to compromise solutions, to pseudo-settlements humiliating in certain cases, and in others appearing to be superficially fair. So they came to him and proposed a settlement. One such settlement said that he could return to Iran and establish any regime of his choice; even if he wanted the people to hold a referendum, they would agree. But he should leave Mohammad Reza Pahlavi on the throne in the manner of Queen Elizabeth. The Shah would not interfere in the country’s political and administrative affairs—he would in fact, have no responsibilities at all, like Queen Elizabeth. He cared about an enthronement ceremony and other trappings of the monarchy, which is the symbol and authority of the country. But the Imam refused. Even some of his friends told him, “Master, this is an equitable solution. Does this symbolic position deserve that we keep up the demonstrations and offer more martyrs?” The Imam

humane impetus to generate victory, hope, and trust, and strike fear into the enemy's heart. This is exactly what the Imam did in Iran on the 15th of Khordad, and never, ever forgot it. For 16 years this massacre was omnipresent in his speeches, literature, and spirit. This is entirely different to what usually happens in the Arab world: we remember the massacre of Deir Yassin on its anniversary, we remember Sabra and Chatila on their anniversary, and the massacre at Qana is no different. Barely a few weeks after it happened, the massacre at Jenin was forgotten by the Arab media, by the Arab spirit, and in Arab literature. To confront the blood-soaked policies of Sharon successfully, these massacres have to be borne into every heart, mind, will, and sinew, and turned into willpower and determination to pursue the path and keep up the resistance. [They] should not become a pretext for dejection, depression, and the spreading of despair among the Palestinians and citizens of this nation.

Fourth, the Imam had to face his *intifada*'s isolation by the entire world. Indeed, amerika and the whole Western world at that time worked to isolate the Imam's movement, with the help of pro-amerikan Arab regimes. This is why, between 1963 and 1979, the Iranian people stood alone on the confrontation lines; no one in the world held conferences about the movement, and no one demonstrated in its favor. Yes, there was some activity in this regard in Lebanon, and in particular the considerable effort exerted by His Eminence, the absent Imam and leader, Sayyed Mousa al-Sadr. But the Imam stood largely alone, as did the Iranian people—either for nationalistic reasons, or on the pretext that they “are Iranians and we are Arabs,” or because “we have nothing to do with him.” At other times they used sectarian pretexts—namely that “This movement is Shia and therefore we Muslims are not concerned by it,” and the like. Yes, they managed to isolate the Imam's movement in Iran, but he remained loyal to his principles, values, and religion, and when the Revolution was

are seeking a perfect world.” While the Imam was facing all these doubts, he insisted that his aim was indeed realistic, and he was at first the only one who said to the people, “Yes, thanks to our reliance on God, and with your help and steadfastness we shall loosen amerika's grip on Iran, expel the zionists from Iran, bring down this regime and expel the Shah from our land.” He used to give them the example of Ibrahim, Musa, and Issa.³ Among his most famous and best known examples was the one that made him ask, “Didn't Musa go alone to meet the oppressive and tyrannical Pharaoh, the absolute ruler of Egypt and the region, without anything in the world to his name except his brothers and a stick? Musa was victorious at the end, and his God is with all those who follow in his path and walk in his footsteps.” This is exactly what the resistance in Lebanon has gone through since 1982, when we announced our aim to expel the occupation from our land unconditionally and without restraints, guarantees, rewards or gifts. Many used to say that this was an unrealistic aim, pure imagination, a folly, and a mirage, when in fact it was the enemy who constantly retreated and the resistance that advanced and advanced; our aim at the end was achieved.

The same is being said today about the *intifada* in Palestine. They repeat the same words: “You are dreaming, you Palestinian *mujahidin*, you Palestinian people. Can ‘israel’ even be expelled from the territories it occupied in 1967? You will not be able to do that.” ‘israel’ is strong, amerika stands behind it, and the whole world supports it; but with their experience, perseverance and diligence the Palestinians will also be able to prove that their aim is genuine and realistic in every sense of the word.

Second, he faced doubt as to the legality of the means he employed, for it was not a military war that the Imam was waging

3 Respectively, the Muslim names given to the three Prophets: Abraham, Moses, and Jesus.

against the Shah; he waged it through the people by bringing them onto the streets to overthrow the Shah's regime. The Shah's response, on the other hand, was so violent and bloody that some people—learned men, religious leaders, and members of the religious, political, and cultural elites—wondered whether all this spilling of blood was justified. I remember during those years some prominent personalities asking who would be answerable to God on judgment day, and who would assume responsibility for all this blood. These doubts reached Imam Khomeini's ears, and he said with all confidence, "I will stand on judgment day and answer for all this blood; it was spilled in the right place and in the name of God; it was spilled in the name of justice and the values for which He had sent His prophets and messengers." Doubt as to the means employed has been voiced in both Iran and Lebanon, and is today one of the main tools in the confrontation with the *intifada* and the resistance in Palestine, every time someone casts doubt on the *raison d'être* of jihad or the legitimacy of martyrdom operations.

Third, the Imam had to face the regime of the Shah's policy of violent and bloody reaction against the rebelling Iranian people. We should recall these incidents not only because they are worth talking about, but also to learn and benefit from this contemporary experience (we are talking about something that happened 50 years ago, during the last century—indeed, the second half of the last century—not about something that happened in the Middle Ages). Here, dear brothers and sisters, I would like to address those who get depressed by the number of martyrs and start wailing, lamenting, beating their chests, and calling for collapse and submission. On the 15th of Khordad,⁴ 1963, the Imam ordered the people to go onto the streets, and they did so. In the span of a single day, and in only one city, Tehran, the Shah's men

4 In the Persian calendar, the third month of the year, which usually starts on May 21 and finishes on June 21.

killed 5,000 Iranian men, women, and children, and the Imam had to face up to [the consequences of] this bloody and violent reaction. Some voices were raised to tell the Imam: This is the result of your speeches, your statements, and your movement, and their disastrous consequences have been visited on our men, women, and children, whose blood has been spilled.

The Imam, however, had another way of facing up to this carnage, and these blood-soaked policies. The carnage, dear brothers and sisters, whether in Tehran on the 15th of Khordad, in Sabra and Chatila, in Qana, earlier on in Deir Yassin, or later on in Jenin,⁵ carries within it the seeds of one reaction and its opposite at the same time. We can take these massacres and smear our faces and clothes with the blood of its victims, rue our fate, and use this blood to spread despair, depression, and fear in the people's hearts, and kill their hope. This massacre carries within it the possibility of this first outcome. At the same time, we can take this massacre, paint our beards, faces, and clothes with its blood, and turn it into anger, revolution, and determination, and a witness to the impasse in which the enemy finds itself. An army that shoots on unarmed and helpless people is in the final analysis a weak one, on the verge of collapse. We turn this massacre into a tool of mobilization, a strong incentive, and a spiritual, moral, and

5 Nasrallah is referring to a number of massacres in recent Middle East history: the massacres in the South Beirut Palestinian refugee camps of Sabra and Chatila in September 1982, when Phalangist Lebanese militiamen, under the watch of the IOF, murdered hundreds of Palestinians and Lebanese; 'israel's' bombing of the UN compound at the South Lebanese town of Qana during 'israel's' April 1996 Grapes of Wrath campaign; and, the farthest back, the Deir Yassin massacre in April 1948, when over 100 Palestinians were killed by Jewish forces. In April 2002, 'israel' launched Operation Defensive Shield against a number of towns in the West Bank, including Jenin's refugee camp, which was partially destroyed by bulldozers.